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A SOLUTION FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

By FRANK CHODOROV

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL has come under heavy criticism in recent years, but it remained for Albert Lynd to sum up its deficiencies in the title of his new book, *Quackery in the Public Schools.** The book is quite up to its title. It digs down to bottom causes for the inadequacies in our public school system, not overlooking the philosophical assumptions of John Dewey, which underlie the controversial educational fads. The embattled parents of America would do better in their struggle with the New Education if they were armed with this material.

But, bold as the book is in its diagnosis, it is woefully weak in its suggested therapy. Mr. Lynd is of the opinion that the faults in our schools could be corrected by a better corps of teachers. To attract such minds to the service, he says, we must be willing to offer better financial emoluments than the teachers now receive; he is in favor of tapping the U.S. Treasury for that purpose.

This is a rather strange *non sequitur* in an otherwise logical presentation. Admitting that teachers are underpaid, it does not follow that more pay would transmute the quackery in the New Education into integrity. No matter what fees you pay a quack he is still a quack. Higher salary would not undo the miseducation which the "progressive" teacher brings to the classroom, nor correct the misinformation in the textbooks furnished him, nor improve the methods which his hierarchical bosses compel him to use under pain of forfeiting promotion.

The fact is that the quackery was not put into the public school system by under-paid teachers, but by the well-paid proponents of the New Education. (This is the new name adopted by the harassed Educationists to take the curse off "progressive" education.) And, be it noted, the quackery got going during a time when the American taxpayer came through with more money for public schools than ever before in our history. What warrant is there for believing that pouring more money into the system would eradicate the quackery?

The quackery, explains Mr. Lynd, consists of a compost of esoteric phrases, in which redundancies abound, all for the purpose of clothing the new Education and its practitioners with an aura of "scientific" profundity. The gobbledygook is affected by the Doctors of Education — a degree they have concocted to replace the classical Ph.D., which calls

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for more learning than they are willing to acquire — to put their theories and practices beyond the comprehension of a critical public, whose consequent confusion will compel them to leave the field to these entrenched "experts". To this ritualistic language is added an involved methodology that is beyond the comprehension of the teacher, let alone the layman.

The ultimate goal of the Educationists is to achieve a monopoly position through the creation of a privileged caste. Their fondest hope at present is to raise pedagogy to the stature of medicine or law, with proper legislative sanctions. Their interest in Federal subventions is not only economic; financial aid would lead to centralization and monopolization, with the Educationists in control.

Meanwhile, if a child does pick up some learning, it is because some conscientious teacher (frequently found in the system) follows a sane course, or the parent is on his job.

NO, MONEY WILL not cure the ills of the public school. Whatever is wrong with the system, including the voodooism of the New Education, is due to the compulsory attendance laws and the compulsory taxes which support it. The public school is a socialized or politically monopolized institution, and suffers from the weaknesses inherent in all monopolies. The only thing that prevents the public school from decaying completely is the fact that it is not a complete monopoly. Local control of the school gives the taxpayer and parent some say in its management, even to the point of occasionally throwing out the "progressive" faddism. If the plans of the Educationists succeed, if the public school is centrally managed by an entrenched bureaucracy, then the present faults of the school will seem insignificant; it will be a political department, not a place of learning.

Nothing will do more to better education in America than the breaking of the public school trust. And if it is broken, nothing else need be done to eradicate its faults.

This is not a proposal to abolish public schools. It is a proposal to put them into competition with free enterprise schools, so that they can prove their worth. And this can be done by the remission to parents of the taxes they are compelled to pay to support politically-controlled schools, in an amount comparable to what they pay for private schooling. The method of effecting this remission — whether by deductions from income taxes or allowances from local levies — is a technical matter; if the principle were established that a parent has the right to buy the educational service he deems best for his child, the fiscal problem of tax remission could easily be solved.

SUPPOSE THIS WERE DONE. Suppose the parents were given the choice of supporting public schools or buying education more to their liking. The current bitter quarrel between parents and "progressive" education would vanish; for parents could withdraw their offspring from the schools that employ this system and patronize schools that do

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not. Those who decry the lack of religious training in the public school would send their children to denominational schools, which they could well do because they would have the money to support more of them; the "double taxation" complaint of the parochial school people would be put to rest. Socialists and Communists could establish and support their own schools, while the rest of us would not be worried about the subjection of our children of these doctrines, and at our expense; the furor about Communist infiltration in the schools would die down.

There would be a welter of schools competing for trade. Some would stress esthetics, others languages, others would go in for utilitarian courses, and so on. Every enterprising pedagog with an educational idea, either as to method or subject matter, would put it on display for possible customers to examine. Mothers of children about to enter school would consult with others of more experience to find the one that to her seems best suited for her budding genius. There would be at least as much parental interest in education as, for instance, there is in the proper feeding of the child; mothers would not just dump their offspring into the public lap. The schools that turned out the best product, through the child, would rise to the top, and the least competent would fall by the wayside. And there would be no fuss about it. The marketplace would decide.

Incidentally, the argument that private schools develop snobbery would be pointless if the tax-remission proposal were adopted. With private schools on "every corner", patronized by people in all walks of life, they would cease to be symbols of wealth and their exclusiveness would vanish.

The public schools would prosper by this competition. Since the more successful private schools would be able to offer their teachers higher wages, they would attract the better minds. The public schools, to stay in business, would have to meet these wage-scales, which they would be able to do, since the competition would compel them to drop their expensive gadgets and experiments. If the authorities persisted in hiring low-priced teachers, they would get only that kind, and the private schools would get more trade.

The problem of overcrowded classes would solve itself. Even if only twenty-five per cent of the public school population were diverted to private and parochial schools, the strain on seating capacity would be eased; perhaps the impossible problem of trying to teach fifty pupils in a class would be solved. The shift might be great enough to make unnecessary a constantly increasing building program, thus relieving the community of a growing bonded indebtedness and a rising tax rate. Fewer buildings would make for better buildings, which competition from the superior physical facilities offered by the private school would force the community to provide.

In short, there are no faults in the public school that competition would not eradicate. And the improvement would come easily and automatically, entirely without resort to political methods. The mere matter of tax remission would settle all our school problems.

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THIS PROPOSAL COMMENDS itself also because it is in line with the democratic principle. The Educationists make much of the word democracy, though they do not define it; it apparently serves as an amorphous endorsement of anything they approve. If democracy means anything, it designates a social or political system in which freedom of choice prevails. So that, if the parent is compelled to accept, and pay for, any kind of education that a majority (or controlling minority) dishes out, the democratic principle is certainly violated.

Yet, the Educationists are dead set against freedom of choice in their appropriated field. Whenever parents presume to question their programs or methods, they are touched to the quick. How dare the biological parents butt in on the mental development of their offspring! Having brought forth a child, their competence is at an end; without a degree from an accredited teachers' college they simply cannot have a valid opinion on its mental upbringing. That is a matter reserved for the fraternity of "experts".

One of their shining lights, the former president of Harvard University, shed some light on the "democratic" attitude of the Educationists in a word. (They always have a word.) The private school, he declared, is bad because it makes for "divisiveness", which means differences of opinion, variations in values, expressions of choice, preferences and discrimination. The opposite of "divisiveness" is conformity. But, this "divisiveness" is of the essence of democracy, as well as a necessary condition for progress. Where it is not permitted, where conformity is imposed, there is neither scope for intellectual curiosity nor freedom. And, certainly, no democracy.

This urgency for conformity (democratic conformity, of course) complements the expertise argument. In private schools, which do not come within their purview, children might get an education, and that would not do; the fraternity's quackery, including their claim to scientific exactitude in all things educative, would be exposed. Their propaganda, therefore, is addressed to the necessity of extending political control of schools, through federal aid and legislation, and to decrying any tendency on the part of parents to escape from their clutches. They most assuredly would not relish an increase of private schools. The suggestion has even been advanced that the accrediting of teachers be limited by law to certain designated teachers' colleges.

It can be seen that what the Educationists are driving toward, whether they know it or not, is the educational system that obtained in ancient Sparta, where the child became the ward of the State once it entered school. And for that, American parents are not quite ready; they still believe that they have parental rights and duties which the State cannot abrogate. They would be in a better position to exercise their rights and fulfill their duties as parents if they were given more latitude in the selection of their children's schooling. The suggestion to make possible a greater freedom of choice through tax remission is democratic, if nothing else.

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

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Before Bermuda: It was Marshall Plan money — say aeronautical engineers — which enabled Britain to develop the NENE jet engine. The British then sold the engine to Soviet Russia which has used it in the MIG to fight our men in Korea. Britain still gets aid from us, and the truce in Korea is uneasy, likely to change into open war ere long.

In view of the above, the accusation made by Dulles against McCarthy in the last twenty-four hours seems absurd in the eyes of veteran observers here. The Wisconsin Senator asked that aid be cut off from allies — such as Britain — who trade with Red China, while the latter's government, in McCarthy's words, "are imprisoning and torturing American men", obviously referring to American soldiers still captive there. It is impossible to understand how U.S. removal of aid would impinge on an ally's sovereignty, as Dulles suggests.

Representative Lawrence Smith, Republican, high member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, commented that it looked to him as if Dulles were talking about something that was already *res adjudicata*, already in statute form under the name of the Battle Act, passed October 26, 1951, as law no. 213. This statute authorizes cutting off of aid to lands which send strategic goods to Iron Curtain countries. Congressman Smith asks: "Does Mr. Dulles mean that we are going to open the gates wider to trade with such countries as Red China?"

This thought of Mr. Smith occurs to others here, who see the Dulles attack on McCarthy as prompted by foreign policy considerations. It has long been noted that any proposal apparently affecting British trade always brings swift reaction from high circles. Some speculate that Dulles wishes to "cover his rear" by his blast at McCarthy, so that he can safely negotiate appeasing arrangements with our allies later this week at Bermuda.

Be that as it may. "General" Dulles (as some dub him today) seemed on unsound ground when he intimated that our defense rested wholly on collaboration with allies across the water. General Bonner Fellers in a special statement today to HUMAN EVENTS commented: "Our security does not depend on NATO powers such as Britain. Regardless of the outcome of combat in Europe, favorable or unfavorable, Russia's best route of attack on the U.S. is [illegible] Arctic polar cap, from Russian Arctic bases, quite independent of any action which might develop in Europe. Our air raid warning system, it is true, depends on Canada's collaboration, but since this system, jointly built and operated, is also Canada's best defense, our interests are identical."

YOUNGSTOWN RECEIVED DEC 3 1953

White House Portrait: One source of the "trouble" in the Executive Mansion — as sympathetic friends see it — is Mr. C. D. Jackson, now the President's adviser on global strategy, but as often as not, counselling Ike on matters which have grave repercussions on domestic politics. Jackson is a former *Time-Life* executive who "played around" with cloak-and-dagger stuff in the Central Intelligence Agency and in whose consciousness the Soviet Russian menace became real only in very recent years. He is fast becoming quite a figure on the national scene, and this is reflected in a current quip: "This is the Age of (C.D.) Jackson".

Specifically, local newshawks who keep an eye on Jackson's performance, assign to him the responsibility for two moves of Ike which scarcely promoted party harmony.

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(1) Last Spring, when the ailing Taft was preparing a speech to be given in Cincinnati, he showed it to Ike before delivering it and got his approval. Taft's remark in the speech that we might have to "go it alone" in the Far East hit the headlines. Jackson is believed to have been the man who got the President to make such comments so many observers concluded: Ike repudiates Taft.

(2) Attorney General Brownell cleared his historic speech (attacking Truman on the White case) with Ike before delivery. Jackson again — according to reliable sources — stepped in and influenced Ike to adopt the rather chilly and negative line which impaired but failed to spoil the Brownell case and eventual victory over Truman.

These matters are known and discussed in GOP party circles. There is naturally, therefore, speculation that Jackson also prompted Ike's expressed hope for "no Communist issue in 1954". Republican Chairman Hall had voiced the contrary, that Communists-in-Government would be a major issue in next year's elections.

Not Merely Gossip: It is believed by many here that former Red spy Gouzenko had been frightened into silence by the strange antics of Lester Pearson, Canada's Minister of External Affairs. It is also suspected that some of the State Department functionaries collaborated in creating this impasse. Meanwhile, there is much discussion of a speech given at the New York Women's Republican Club by writer Victor Lasky, in which he charged that Elizabeth Bentley (former Red spy and trusted informant of the FBI) had given the following testimony to a congressional committee in secret session. Bentley, said Lasky, testified that Pearson transmitted vital information to a Red spy ring she headed while he (Pearson) was counsellor in the Canadian Legation in Washington. "But as soon as word of this testimony got around", Lasky declared, "the Canadians put on pressure through the State Department and further investigations by the Senate Committee into the shocking allegations were stymied".

● It is a commentary on the passing of the "era of fear" which existed in the early Forties, when Lindbergh was smeared and ostracized, that today his autobiography should be a best seller and at present the subject of negotiations for movie rights. It is understood that delay in these pourparlers here developed because the Colonel wants neither the kidnapping case nor any story of his courtship of Anne Morrow, his wife, to be part of the script.

● Eric Johnston, special emissary sent by the State Department to the Near East to ease tensions between Israel and the Arab States, reportedly got nowhere. The Arabs regarded him as biased in favor of Israel because of his association with Zionists here and some Arab leaders refused to meet him. Someone — say members of Congress — in the State Department bungled this selection of an emissary badly.

State Department: Why is Dulles appeasing Britain and Russia? The reason lies in the continuing left-wing character and aims of the State Department bureaucracy, which inevitably shapes top-level policy. In the past few days, the Senate Internal Security subcommittee has issued a book of hearings (#13 in the series, "Interlocking Subversion in Government") showing how the State Department acquired this leftist complexion.

From a total working force of 209 in 1910, State Department personnel rose to 2,755 in 1943. But the big and significant jump was from 2,755 to 7,625 between 1943 and 1946. This took place in 1945. Some 5,000 persons came into the State Department from the wartime agencies of Federal Economic Agency (FEA), Office of War Information (OWI), Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and Office of Inter-American Affairs.

"I would say", testified J. Anthony Panuch, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State to the subcommittee, "that the biggest single thing that contributed to the infiltration of the State Department was the merger of 1945. The effects of that are still being felt, in my judgment." HUMAN EVENTS has often pointed out the importance of this New Deal invasion of the formerly conservative State Department, how the New Dealers by the thousands swamped the old-line diplomats so that by 1950, it was pointed out by Professor McCamy, 77 per cent of these who influence policy in the Department had been there only a few years.

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Why was this concentration planned and brought about? Mr. Panuch said: "I think the plan was revolutionary, revolutionary in the sense that it was intended to establish the machinery of perpetual control of national policy through the control of foreign policy and expenditures."

Panuch went on to show that one of the strategic pillars of the "revolutionary" plan was the UN. "If working control of United States foreign policy focalized in the United Nations Organization, the role of Congress in our foreign affairs could be by-passed or at least assured by massive propaganda attacking its 'provincial' sabotage of the machinery for the preservation of world peace. To accomplish this objective, the merger of the personnel, functions, properties and funds of five huge wartime foreign agencies with the State Department was accomplished by Executive order on the recommendation of the Bureau of the Budget." Panuch goes on to say that one of the objectives was to "shift control over the formulation of foreign policy from the career Foreign Service officers of the Department to personnel of reliable ideological orientation".

And what was "reliable"? Here is the "pay-off". Panuch says: "the end of this ideology may fairly be described as a socialized America in a world commonwealth of Communist and Socialist states dedicated to peace through collective security, political, economic, and social reform; and the redistribution of national wealth on a global basis."

Tax Tinkering: Rep. Noah Mason comes forth with a plan to end tax competition between states and Federal government. Since Mr. Mason is a member of both the tax-writing Ways & Means Committee of the House and of the commission on intergovernmental relations, headed by Clarence Manion, his plan is newsworthy.

The essence of the plan is the rearrangement of fiscal powers in a manner to make some sense of the tax hodge-podge under which we now live. For instance, he proposes that the states relinquish their power to tax incomes, leaving that to the Federal government only, while the Federal government would relinquish its power to tax estates and gifts; the states only would tax gasoline, under this plan, while liquor and tobacco taxes would be levied by the Federal government only; and so on. The general idea is to abolish tax duplications.

Something can be said of this tax-tinkering plan — but not much. There may be some reason for shifting tax powers from one jurisdiction to another, but so long as the total amount of taxes to be paid is the same — and Mr. Mason so maintains in his announcement — the payer can hardly get excited over the proposal. If Mr. Mason could show that his plan favors the states, as against the Federal government, it would attract support; for such a shift would tend to strengthen the states and weaken the Federal government, which would be in the direction of decentralization and, therefore, of more freedom. We suspect that this thought underlies the plan. If, for instance, the states had the sole power of taxing estates and gifts, it is reasonable to suppose that some states, in an effort to attract population and capital, would go in for exemptions in a big way; the other states would have to follow suit or lose some of their more opulent citizens.

It would make more sense, however, if the tax system which prevailed before the Sixteenth (income tax) Amendment were restored. Under the Constitution, the Federal government had a monopoly of tariff taxes only; it shared with the states the power to levy excise taxes. Income and estate taxes could be levied only by the states, and these levies never amounted to much because competition from neighboring states kept the more rapacious states in line. The Federal government was able to balance its budget through most of the years, and the states always had enough money to carry on their legitimate functions. And the American citizen kept most of what he earned. What's wrong with that?

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Werner Picht: Vom Wesen des Krieges und vom Kriegswesen der Deutschen (Vorwerk Verlag). Reviewed by F. A. Voigt.

It is frequently assumed that a Christian is bound to be a pacifist. Nevertheless, Professor Butterfield, one of the greatest of contemporary historians, is a Christian and no pacifist. In his *Christianity*,

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Diplomacy and War, he recognizes that war may be a necessity. His book is a plea for a return to the balance of power and for restricting wars to "limited objectives".

This English Christian has a fellow-spirit in the German Christian, Werner Picht, who points out that the New Testament promises no release from war in this world: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. X, 34) and "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matt. XXIV, 7). Picht, in the little book under review, invokes the Pauline injunction to "obey the powers that be" (Rom. XIII, 1) as binding on the soldier (p. 46). Wars will be with us always, and to fight if called upon by legitimate authority will always be the duty of the citizen — his Christian duty if he be a Christian.

War was once the *ultima ratio regis*, but, with the rise of the masses in the modern age, it ceased to have measure. Its "objectives" became illimitable. George Bernanos, in his profound *La Liberte, Pour Quoi Faire?* tells us "that modern wars are not military wars, but crises that grow more violent every time". The Allies who went to war in defense of their security against the exorbitant power of Germany, pursued illimitable objectives as the war developed. The result was that they were unable to make peace. Although the foe was totally defeated, they fought on, not to reduce, but to destroy, the power of Germany.

Even when the clash of arms was over, they prolonged the state of war with the purpose of converting the German people to "democracy". They did not make peace until they began to realise that they must undo what they had done, that the power they had destroyed must be restored.

Both Picht and Butterfield point out that a just war will be fought for a specific purpose; not merely for peace but for *a* peace.

In the present clash of arms, the Atlantic Powers have gone to the opposite extreme. It is as erroneous to fight on too small as to fight on too large a front. "Neither too much nor too little" is necessity's command. Because they disobeyed this command, they have neither won nor lost, and may not even have finished, the Korean war. And behind their self-imposed excessive limitations, they uphold abstract ideals, embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, which commit them to illimitable objectives. They are, according to Picht, afflicted with "ideological uncertainty" and are confronting the "open falsehood", which the Soviet Union has "elevated to a principle", with a "fiction" which they, too, have raised to a principle — a fiction, and not a truth (p. 42).

Hitler was the "exponent of nihilism and of the revolt of the masses" (p. 40). In the last free elections held before Hitler made himself master of Germany, the National Socialists and the Communists together polled a huge majority. It was a stampede on the part of the masses from limitless liberty to limitless despotism — and thence to limitless war.

The German army became the docile instrument of this limitless despotism in pursuit of limitless objectives, thereby forfeiting its traditional character and its traditional honor. A few men tried to save Germany — and the honor of German arms — by an attempt on the life of Hitler. They failed, and he took a terrible revenge — he artificially prolonged their deaths "by slow hangings which were filmed for the delectation of the Fuhrer" (p. 232). According to Picht, one hundred and fifty German generals and admirals committed suicide in despair and shame — "in the whole history of German arms there was never a blacker hour" (p. 232).

"The true soldier would rather be stood up against a wall than make war on women and children" and the tradition of German arms was "liquidated irreversibly" (p. 232).

Nevertheless, the German soldier of old will find a successor some day, for the duty of national defense remains the soldier's duty in all countries, but "between the *defensor patriae* and the functionary of the totalitarian state there will always be an absolute contradiction" (p. 260).

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